

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES RECERTIFICATION OF MEXICO AS CO-OPERATING PARTNER IN WAR ON DRUGS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, a government report says last year not one major drug dealer was arrested in Mexico. Last year, seizures of drugs and arrests for drugs in Mexico declined. Last year, they say nearly all of the drugs and narcotics sold on the streets of America come from Mexico.

Think about it. America is drowning in cocaine and heroin; and, after all that, the White House has announced they will once again certify Mexico as a full cooperating partner in our war on drugs. Beam me up here.

Mexico is a partner all right, with Colombian drug dealers, not with Uncle Sam, and this tough love policy is just not working. Ladies and gentlemen of Congress, there is no war on drugs without the help of the military at our border. It is time to get on to that discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back all the ad-diction, death and health care costs in our country.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT

(Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, as a part of a bipartisan effort, I am introducing a bill that takes the first step toward reauthorizing the Older Americans Act, the premier senior citizens services law. It is past time for Congress to get off the dime and improve the services our seniors need and expect.

The Act performs a vital role in the everyday lives of millions of senior Americans by providing nutrition, disease prevention, health promotion and in-home services. Millions of seniors have benefited from the Act's programs.

In 1996, the Older Americans Act provided 238 million meals to over 3 million seniors. The Act also funded approximately 6,400 senior centers, 40 million rides, and more than 13 million requests for assistance.

I am ready to work with the committee chairman, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING); the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON); the ranking member, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY); and the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. MARTINEZ); to move this reauthorization through the House; and I look forward to working with my friends from both sides of the aisle to achieve a good bipartisan reauthorization.

MIDDLE CLASS AMERICANS DESERVE TAX RELIEF AND THEY DESERVE IT NOW

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, recently the President, in a talk to college students, revealed what he really thinks of tax relief for American families. He said, and I quote, 15 years from now, if the Congress wants to give more tax relief, let them do it, end quote.

So, does this mean that the college students to whom he was speaking must wait until they are in their thirties, most likely married and with children and with steep financial commitments like home mortgages, to receive relief from heavy taxation?

Ridiculous.

This is certainly unwelcome news to all the middle class American families I hear from, who already spend more in taxes than they do for food, shelter, transportation and clothing combined.

With this mentality, it is a good thing the President is only in charge for another 2 years, not 15. Middle class Americans, moms and dads, workers, even students, deserve tax relief; and they deserve it now.

MIXING SOCIAL SECURITY WITH OPERATING EXPENSES, NO BUSINESS IN AMERICA COULD DO THAT

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, by Washington definition, we have a budget surplus, only by Washington definition. Because what we have done is mix Social Security, our retirement, with operating expenses. No business in America could do that. The President, instead of wanting to put 100 percent of the surplus back where it belongs into the Social Security retirement account, he wants to spend 32 percent of it on other programs, new programs.

One of them, for example, is to expand AmeriCorps. You may not be familiar with that. That is the one where they pay volunteers, teenagers, to do work that they were doing for free. The Clinton administration now pays them and calls it AmeriCorps.

I think we should preserve Social Security. We should protect it. We should put 100 percent of the surplus back where it belongs, into Social Security, not into teenage volunteer payment programs. That is part of the whacky fringe left agenda and, Mr. President, my grandmother says no.

IF WE WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

(Ms. STABENOW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support the President's proposal to take the overwhelming majority of the budget surplus and place it into the Social Security Trust Fund to protect Social Security and Medicare. We have begun the process of balancing the budget, but we have not yet completed it until we repay the Social Security Trust Fund and totally strengthen Medicare. We can do that under the President's proposal by taking the overwhelming majority, 80 percent of the surplus, and putting it back towards strengthening Social Security and Medicare. That then allows us to take a small portion of the budget and to invest it in other critical needs such as defense preparedness and education.

If we work together, we can strengthen Social Security and Medicare. We can pay down the debt, which in the long run will lower interest rates and give a real tax cut to the middle class by lowering interest payments on mortgages, car payments, credit cards; and that is the way that we get more dollars back into people's pockets.

FEDERAL BALONEY

(Mr. FORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's governors are in town this week; and many of them are here with their hands out and their minds closed.

I am referring to several governors who have taken aim at the President's budget proposals for education reform.

The President has proposed an ambitious education agenda based on accountability, performance, competition and competency. He proposes to give States and school districts the resources they will need to modernize their schools, hire qualified teachers and reach higher standards.

What are the governors saying about these proposals? The governor of Arkansas says that he wants the dough without the strings. The governor of Mississippi called the administration's proposals Federal baloney.

These statements betray an alarming ideological shift among these State executives. Fundamentally, what they are saying is that they would like to spend tax dollars with impunity. They should know, as most citizens do, that just as the private sector cannot spend money without accountability, neither can government.

Let us give the States the resources they need but let us do it in a sound and sensible way, with accountability. That means ending social promotions, but giving those kids and schools the extra help they need to improve. That means making sure that all teachers are qualified. That means giving parents annual report cards on student performance.

Federal baloney, Mr. Speaker? Hardly.

Let us end the rhetoric and embrace the national leadership to turn around our Nation's schools.